



Council Meeting

**Wednesday, 13th
October, 2021**

HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Hastings Borough Council to be held at the Council Chamber, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3UY, on Wednesday, 13th October, 2021 at 6.00 pm at which meeting the business specified below is proposed to be transacted.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Legal Officer

Muriel Matters House
Breeds Place
Hastings

6 October 2021

AGENDA

10. Questions (if any) from:
- a) Members of the public under Rule 11
 - b) Councillors under Rule 12

Note: Nothing contained in this agenda or in the attached reports and minutes of committees constitutes an offer or acceptance of an offer or an undertaking or contract by the Borough Council

Questioner	Question	Answer
<p>Gabriel Carlyle</p>	<p>Heating residential properties is one of the major sources of the UK's carbon emissions. Properly insulating them is therefore an essential step in tackling climate change.</p> <p>In its June 2018 report, the UK's independent statutory Committee on Climate Change (CCC) called for all practicable lofts to be insulated by 2022, and for all practicable cavity walls – and 2 million solid walls - to be insulated by 2030 ('Reducing UK emissions: 2018 Progress Report to Parliament', https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-2018-Progress-Report-to-Parliament.pdf).</p> <p>However in its June 2021 report to Parliament, the CCC noted that: 'There has been little of the necessary progress in upgrading the building stock' with insulation rates remaining 'well below the peak market delivery achieved up to 2012 before key policies were scrapped' ('Progress in reducing emissions: 2021 Report to Parliament', https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-2021-Report-to-Parliament.pdf). Indeed, they note, 'installations of loft and solid wall insulation are [currently] only a third of the rate needed by 2021 in the CCC pathway'.</p> <p>In light of the above:</p> <p>A. How many residential properties are there in Hastings & St Leonards that have lofts that it would be practicable to insulate, but which are not currently insulated? What is the estimated cost of installing loft insulation in these properties?</p> <p>B. How many new loft insulations took place in Hastings in 2019 and 2020?</p> <p>C. How many residential properties are there in Hastings & St</p>	<p>Councillor Evans:</p> <p>HBC's Housing Team has a remit that focuses predominately on the private rented sector and therefore we are not exposed to direct information about all properties in the Hastings and St Leonards area which includes owner-occupied properties.</p> <p>Data such at that requested can be by going to https://epc.opendatacommunities.org/ where once registered you can access information and search various parameters including loft insulation.</p> <p>The council use this resource as well as other databases such as Pathways which again can be accessed if you register. You can use these services directly as the data is not for Hastings Borough Council to share and circulate. The data is based on open-source information and therefore may not be 100% accurate.</p> <p>The Housing Team are involved in a number of initiatives that seek to both reduce fuel poverty and improve the energy efficiency of people's homes.</p> <p>Funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has enabled proactive and targeted resources to advise and support landlords to meet their requirements under MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) and where reasonable and proportionate enforce those standards which require all properties offered for rent to be a minimum of an E rating.</p> <p>The outcomes of the second phase of the project which HBC were involved in resulted in to date sending out 90 nudge letters. We have initially focussed on the areas with the highest concentration of F & G rated properties. This also broadly coincides with the areas with the highest instances of fuel poverty.</p>

Leonards that have:

- (a) cavity walls; or
- (b) solid walls, that it would be practicable to insulate, but which are not currently insulated? What is the estimated cost of insulating the walls in these properties?

D. How many new cavity wall and solid wall insulations took place in Hastings in 2019 and 2020?

We have opened 196 proactive M3 worksheets, these are properties that have required further investigation. We have 32 properties currently live and in various stages of investigation (including waiting for information from other councils, in process of selling property, works in progress, yet to respond to nudge letter).

Whilst the nudge letters have seen a significant success rate in obtaining compliance with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards, we have had to send Compliance Notices out to those that failed to communicate with us. Out of the 196 proactive M3 worksheets we created, 33 (16%) had to be progressed to a Compliance Notice.

Our Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) return for 2021 highlights the impacts that have been made through insulation and other measures via our Green Homes Grant Local Area Delivery Scheme Funding, ECO Flex statement of Intent etc. The 2021 return will be available [here](#) very shortly.

We have recently submitted a bid for £2.2 million from the Sustainable Warmth Fund to support continued upgrades and improvements to residential properties to make them more energy efficient. This will incorporate a range of measures including loft insulation and the vision adopted is very much a fabric first approach. Successful bids are due to be announced by BEIS at the end of October / early November.

<p>Andrea Needham</p>	<p>In its June 2021 progress report to Parliament (https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-2021-Report-to-Parliament.pdf) the Government's own Committee on Climate Change noted that: 'The rigour of the Climate Change Act helped bring COP26 to the UK, but it is not enough for Ministers to point to the Glasgow summit and hope that this will carry the day with the public.</p> <p>Leadership is required, detail on the steps the UK will take in the coming years, clarity on tax changes and public spending commitments, active engagement with people and businesses across the country. These steps are essential, so people can see opportunity in climate-positive choices.</p> <p>We cannot rely on good will alone. 'This demands a step change in Government action, but it is hard to discern any comprehensive strategy in the climate plans we have seen in the last 12 months. There are gaps and ambiguities. Climate resilience remains a second-order issue, if it is considered at all. We continue to blunder into high-carbon choices.</p> <p>Our Planning system and other fundamental structures have not been recast to meet our legal and international climate commitments.'</p> <p>If Hastings Borough Council determines that national policies are making it impossible for it to meet its share of the UK's obligations under the Climate Change Act, is it willing to take legal action in order to force the Government to align these policies with the Act?</p>	<p>Councillor Evans:</p> <p>The advice of the Monitoring Officer (notwithstanding the pressing demands to meet the challenge of climate change) is that taking legal action against the Government is not a matter for which HBC has a power, duty, function and moreover the funds to enforce.</p> <p>Hastings Borough Council has been ravaged by austerity cuts over the last 11 years. As a Socialist council we want to direct our funding towards helping the most vulnerable within our community, especially those on low incomes, who will need extra assistance when transitioning to cope with climate change. Legal tassels are very expensive, time consuming and without guaranteed outcomes, it's not what we consider a priority for the public purse.</p> <p>The council will nevertheless continue to play its part within its responsibilities and functions to support climate change obligations and commitments.</p>
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Amanda Jobson

Hastings and St Leonard's is a beautiful place, now with a new stretch of Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ - 2020). If the natural environment is imperative to 'our survival' and tourism vital for a town.

What actions for 'Climate Change' are being implemented to stop the frequent (CSO'S) combined sewer outfall from (Southern Water), overflowing into our coastline and shores, not only polluting marine life but affecting the health of a community, during the ongoing and frequent storms and floods we are now facing.

Councillor Evans:

Natural England have responsibility for the designated Marine Conservation Zone designation [MCZ Beachy Head East](#)

The Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) are owned and controlled by Southern Water, and the Environment Agency is the body responsible for enforcement relating to pollution caused by the inappropriate operation of CSOs.

Although HBC does not have direct power in this area, we are looking to pull every lever at our disposal to ensure Hastings' beaches are as clean as possible. We believe that CSOs are an outdated way of dealing with the issue of surges in storm water overwhelming the sewerage system, and the council is pressing Southern Water to spend more on their local infra-structure, including replacing CSOs.

The Leader, Deputy Leader of the Council, and myself have raised this with the Chief Executive of Southern Water when we met last week, to discuss the Bulverhythe Sewer Failure that occurred this Summer. Going forward, the CSO is now a priority issue for us.

From a climate change perspective, anything that helps rainwater to be absorbed into the ground rather than simply running off into the sewerage system will reduce the pressure on CSOs. So in relation to the built environment, things like tree planting, permeable landscaping rather than tarmac and concrete, roof gardens, and of course these have biodiversity benefits too.

The Council have an agency agreement with ESCC whereby we manage the 'highway trees' on their behalf. As a result we have always tried to retain as many highway trees as possible. This helps to keep streets cool and support local biodiversity. Whereas some council's have removed many of theirs to reduce the associated maintenance costs.

		<p>The majority of planning applications involving additional areas of hardstanding to park vehicles require a sustainable urban drainage scheme (Suds) in order to show that rainwater can drain away from the site in a suitable way.</p> <p>The Council has supported and promoted the 'Clean Seas' Project that was set up in 2013 to help address the problem of environmental pollution arising from domestic plumbing connecting to the surface water drainage system as opposed to the main sewer system.</p>
<p>Virginia Vilela</p> <p>Page 5</p>	<p>Tourism is key to our Town's economy and Hastings and St Leonards seafront appears to be falling behind other resorts with innovative ideas to encourage tourism to the town despite our famous name.</p> <p>A large volume of our seafront is given over to parking, largely car parks and the only open space that could be developed for innovative leisure use in West St Leonards is earmarked by the council for housing and commercial development.</p> <p>What is the council's strategy to improve and enhance our Seafront and therefore reinforce our tourism economy?</p>	<p>Councillor Barnett:</p> <p>Tourism is indeed vital to the town and is estimated to have supported over 7000 jobs and contributing over £385m to the local economy in 2019.</p> <p>Since publishing the Seafront Strategy (hastings.gov.uk) in 2015 and delivering many of the commitments within the strategy the seafront features as a key element of the new emergent Local Plan alongside the Foreshore Trust Business plan.</p> <p>The Council has secured funding over many years to enhance and develop the seafront, including to support the projects listed below and projects within the coastal communities fund, designed to enhance the seafront and encourage tourism and footfall along the whole stretch of our urban coastline.</p> <p>The Stade development around ten years ago created a major new art gallery, a new cafe, and popular event space, which continues to host events all year round. A few years earlier the Azur helped revitalise the seafront in St Leonards, and the area around Goat Ledge in front of Warrior Square has become hugely</p>

popular with residents and visitors alike.

The new pier tenants have helped turn the seafront landmark into a major attraction and music venue. The Source Park has transformed the derelict White Rock Baths site, and the addition of the courtyard this year has made the area even more lively.

The public sector funding that has helped much of this is now not so readily available due to national funding reductions so we welcome recent private sector investment, for example, the Old Town funfair.

It has been great to see that the seafront and beach have been busier than ever this summer, with many local residents and visitors commenting about the buzz in the town.

We are using a partnership approach with the private sector at West Marina to regenerate the site for innovative leisure and housing. I look forward to detailed discussions with residents, local businesses and our development partners starting soon.

In 2021 the Council secured Town Deal funding [Hastings Town Deal Blog](#) which includes capital infrastructure investment for projects on the seafront and the town centre including the innovative [Town Centre Public Realm & Green Connections — Hastings Town Deal](#) and the Castle.

It's not just about capital investment either: to support the local economy and attract visitors to the town, the Council funds the Museum and Art Gallery, the White Rock Theatre, the cliff railways and street scene through street cleansing, sustainable planting, parks and open spaces, coastal protection and management and supports local events and festivals details of which can be found at [1066 Country of Origin - Visit 1066 Country](#)

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		<p>The council is now engaged at Chief Executive level in securing better water quality for our beaches by holding Southern Water to account, not just for their recent sewage leak at Bulverhythe, but also for ensuring long term investment across the town.</p>
<p>Tony Collins</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 7</p>	<p>What is the Council doing to support the development of housing cooperatives in Hastings and St Leonards?</p>	<p>Councillor Batsford:</p> <p>Cooperative living is very close to my heart as I lived in and contributed to one in Hastings for many years when I was a young man looking not only for an affordable place to live but that sense of common bond and agency you get when living with like minded people.</p> <p>The council has been using its Community Housing Fund grant received in 2017 to support the development of community led housing locally. We contributed to the establishment and ongoing development of the Sussex Community Housing Hub which provides specialist support to local groups interested in community led housing, including housing cooperatives.</p> <p>Alongside this we have awarded grants directly to local groups to support the expansion of community housing. These grants have supported a range of activities including property refurbishment, project development and start-up costs, initial survey work, financial modelling and capacity building.</p> <p>In this time of spiralling rents, and for many the insecurity of tenancy that almost over 50% of our fellow Hastings people experience, co-ops could be one of the many solutions that can provide that stable home.</p>

		<p>I have met with those who currently run and live in the Hastings cooperatives and have attended the training sessions. The offer is still there from me as Lead for Housing that anything the Council can do to facilitate or support the forming of co-ops we will be there.</p> <p>I believe that co-ops need to form themselves and normally the group have a common purpose to form around so it's important that those living in the co-op have full ownership and the amazing skills and training offered by the Sussex Community Housing Hub is a great starting point.</p> <p>I would be excited to see growth of this type of housing in Hastings.</p>
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